

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BELIZE 601

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PBOR, PGOV, BH, UK, US, CU
SUBJECT: FOLLOW UP TO PRICE LUNCHEON PARTY

REF: BELIZE 596

1. THERE WERE SOME INTERESTING RESULTS FOLLOWING FROM MY LUNCHEON MEETING WITH PREMIER, MONDAY JUNE 12. TUESDAY, I HAD PHONE CALL FROM GOVERNOR MCENTEE WHO WISHED SEE ME TO DISCUSS SOME QTE POSSIBLE MISUNDERSTANDINGS END QTE. WE AGREED ON 1130 THURS. FOLLOWED BY LUNCH IN HIS QUARTERS.

2. MEETING WAS CORDIAL AND I HOPE AVERTED ANY POTENTIAL MISUNDERSTANDING. I WAS SURPRISED WHEN, AT START OF CONVERSATION, MCENTEE ASKED IF I MINDED IF BRIAN BERRY, HIS DEPUTY, SAT IN TO TAKE NOTES; I SAID I HAD NO OBJECTION. MCENTEE THEN STATED THAT FOLLOWING MY LUNCH WITH PRICE, THE PREMIER AND DEPUTY PREMIER HAD COME TO BELIZE HOUSE FOR USUAL MONDAY AFTERNOON MEETING. AFTER THAT SESSION, WHICH INCLUDED SEVERAL OTHERS, PRICE AND ROGERS REMAINED BEHIND, SAYING THEY WISHED TO DISCUSS A FEW THINGS WITH GOVERNOR.

3. FIRST WAS QUESTION OF PRICE TRIP TO BELGRADE. PREMIER
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STATED US CONSUL GENERAL DID NOT APPEAR PARTICULARLY UPSET AT THIS POSSIBILITY. MCENTEE ASKED IF PRICE HAD EXPLAINED PURPOSE OF TRIP. I REPLIED HE HAD USED EXPRESSION "THIRD WORLD CONTEXT" TO WHICH MCENTEE REPLIED IT WAS FOR PLANNING PURPOSES FOR NEXT NON-ALIGNED MEETING TO BE HELD IN HAVANA. I SAID PRICE HAD NOT MENTIONED THIS ASPECT OF TRIP BUT THAT I FELT MY RESPONSE WOULD HAVE BEEN THE SAME. MCENTEE SAID

HE HAD NO MAJOR PROBLEMS WITH THIS. HOWEVER, HE WAS MORE CONCERNED ABOUT MY COMMENTS ON THE QUESTION OF VISAS FOR CUBANS. GOVERNOR TOLD ME I WAS QUOTED BY PRICE AS HAVING SAID I COULD SEE NO OBJECTIONS TO THE CUBANS COMING HERE TO DISCUSS TRADE MATTERS. I INTERRUPTED GOVERNOR TO EXPLAIN THAT WORD TRADE HAD NEVER RPT NEVER BEEN USED BY PRICE AT ANY TIME, AND THAT I HAD SAID A VISIT UNDER AUSPICES OF CDCC OF LEGITIMATE TECHNICIANS ON SINGLE MISSION DID NOT SEEM TO ME TO BE OUT OF KEEPING WITH OUR OWN GENERAL STAND STILL ON CUBAN RELATIONS. MCENTEE THEN SAID HE RECEIVING SIGNALS WE WERE DRAWING AWAY FROM CUBANS; I SAID I FELT WE WERE NOT EXACTLY DOING THAT BUT PERHAPS MARKING TIME PENDING A CLARIFICATION OF AFRICAN SITUATION.

4. WE DICUSSED CUBAN SITUATION AT SOME LENGTH; I CONTINUED TO HOLD TO BELIEF THESE VISITORS IN MULTILATERAL CDCC CONTEXT WOULD NOT CAUSE USG UNNECESSARY CONCERN. I SAID THAT STRAIGHT BILATERAL EXCHANGE WOULD BE DIFFERENT MATTER AND SHOULD BE SEEN AS SUCH. IT EVIDENT THESE VISITORS CAUSING MCENTEE CONSIDERABLE HEART BURN. I ALSO NOTED MY AWARENESS THAT PRICE'S QUESTION AND MY RESPONSE TO IT MIGHT HAVE NOT BEEN QUITE WHAT GOVERNOR WOULD HAVE WANTED BUT I FELT I HAD TO REFLECT WHAT I THOUGHT TO BE THE VIEWS OF WASHINGTON I BELIEVE HE ACCEPTED THAT EXPLANATION ALTHOUGH HE-AND I PRESUME LONDON-SEEM TO BE VERY WORRIED ABOUT CUBAN POTENTIAL HERE. WE DISCUSSED, REACHING NO CONCLUSIONS, PRICE'S ATTITUDE TOWARD CONFIDENTIAL

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CUBA. IS PREMIER NAIVE OR IS HE SO DRIVEN BY DESIRE FOR INDEPENDENCE HE WILL TAKE HELP FROM ANY QUARTER? IT IS OBVIOUSLY AN IMPORTANT QUESTION AND WE BOTH WISHED WE HAD A MORE CLEAR UNDERSTANDING OF THE MAN'S MOTIVATION.

5. GOVERNOR AND I PARTED ON WHAT I FEEL ARE GOOD TERMS. I THANKED HIM FOR HIS FRANKNESS IN ASKING ME TO COME AND TALK WITH HIM AND HE SAID HE APPRECIATED MY RESPONSES. I HOPE MY ACCOUNT OF OUR ATTITUDE VIZ A VIZ CUBA REFLECTS CURRENT THINKING. I FEEL IT WOULD BE EXTREMELY FOOLISH FOR US TO ATTEMPT TO PLAY THE STERN SCHOOL MASTER WITH PRICE; TO ATTEMPT TO CUT OFF ALL COMMUNICATION WITH HAVANA WILL ONLY DRIVE BOTH PARTIES INTO DEEPER COVER AND WILL CREATE NEEDLESS ANTAGONISM WHERE NONE EXISTS NOW. TWO OTHER THINGS WERE PASSED ON TO ME BY THE GOVERNOR BOTH RELATED TO THE SAME LUNCHEON CONVERSATION. THE BELIZEANS WERE VERY CONCERNED THAT I MIGHT REACT NEGATIVELY TO YUGOSLAV VISIT, WHICH THEY FEEL A MOST IMPORTANT MATTER AND, THE INVITATION OF EVEN TWO CUBANS HAS CAUSED DEEP UPSET WITHIN THE CABINET. MIN. PERDOMO IN PARTICULARLY IS ANGRY SINCE HIS MINISTRY, TRADE, WILL HAVE TO DEAL WITH THE GROUP IF THEY DO COME. PERHAPS THE BELIZEAN CABINET WILL SETTLE THE ISSUE WITHOUT ANY

OUTSIDE INVOLVEMENT.

6. I THINK GOV. MAY BE REPORTING THIS MEETING IN SOME DETAIL
AND SO I DO THE SAME. REQUEST COMMENTS. MY FINAL THOUGHT
WOULD BE THAT IF PRICE AND CO. ARE TRYING TO PLAY MCENTEE AND
MYSELF AGAINST EACH OTHER, IT IS MY OWN PLAN NOT TO LET THEM
SUCCEED AND I BELIEVE HIS ALSO.

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